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Second session
Sierra Leone configuration

Summary record of the 1st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 12 October 2006, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Gaspar Martins ..... (Angola)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (PBC/2/SIL/1)

1. **The Chairman** said that the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission represented a turning point in the implementation of the Outcome of the 2005 World Summit, since the Commission brought together all actors involved with countries emerging from conflict.

2. Sierra Leone had come far since the tragic decade of the 1990s, but there was still an urgent need for sustained assistance from the international community. The meeting would also provide an opportunity to hear directly from the Vice-President of Sierra Leone on the country's needs for sustainable peace and security.

3. He took it that the Commission wished to adopt the provisional agenda for the Sierra Leone configuration, as contained in document PBC/2/SIL/1.

4. *It was so decided.*

5. **The Chairman** said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Commission wished to hold open meetings under the Sierra Leone configuration.

6. *It was so decided.*

7. **The Chairman** said that, if he heard no objection, he would prepare a summary of the day's deliberations.

8. *It was so decided.*

Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone (PBC/2/SIL/CRP.1)

Critical issues for consolidating peace

9. **Mr. Berewa** (Sierra Leone) said that the Peacebuilding Commission provided an opportune forum for a dialogue with the international community on the challenges facing Sierra Leone and its plans for the future, to help it safeguard and sustain its hard-won peace.

10. There was peace in Sierra Leone, successful democratic elections had already been held, and the country could proceed with the normal business of development. Yet there were indications of very credible threats to peace. Sierra Leone's viability as a State could be jeopardized unless it tackled certain obstacles to its long-term peace and stability.

11. Five years after the conflict, his country had been able to restore the authority of the State throughout the country, disarm former combatants, resettle over one million displaced people, re-establish public and social institutions, rehabilitate and rebuild government infrastructure, provide some basic services, and encourage business to return. In a short period, it had moved from a phase of humanitarian assistance to national reconstruction, restructuring of State institutions and creation of an atmosphere of stability and a return to normal life.

12. Sierra Leone had successfully implemented its Poverty Reduction Strategy with support from external donors, trebled the school enrolment rate and doubled the number of health clinics. It had opened up the economy and enjoyed macroeconomic stability, with a growth rate of 7 per cent over the past three years. In the area of governance, national and local elections had been pronounced free and fair by international observers, key public institutions were being reinforced and decentralization was being pursued.

13. Notwithstanding that progress, the Government realized that the more difficult tasks were still to come and that failures in development policy and practice had been at the root of the past conflict. It was therefore designing options that would put it on an irreversible path to sustainable development.

14. Youth unemployment was a major concern. Sierra Leone had a young population, with over 60 per cent below the age of 35, the vast majority of whom were unemployed. Over 1.5 million youths lived in poverty. Without jobs they were disenchanted, volatile and ready to erupt into violence. Unless they could be given hope, those growing numbers of young people would either become fodder for ruthless politicians or resort to crime and other anti-social activities. In both cases, the result would pose a direct and serious threat to peace and stability. The Government had prepared a programme to provide employment opportunities in the short and medium term, which it had launched with its own resources, but it looked to external partners to meet some of the costs involved.

15. Capacity weaknesses pervaded all areas of the economy, especially the public service. Current levels of economic growth could not be maintained with existing capacity, nor could basic services be delivered

efficiently. Furthermore, weak capacity and its attendant inefficiencies encouraged corruption. The Government had therefore given priority to reform of the civil service, the judiciary and the security sectors, and was looking for long-term partnerships to accompany the process over time.

16. Another important issue was accountability and effective use of public resources. Many variables were involved: inefficiency, poor management, weak coordination mechanisms, incompetence, greed and corruption. While it was necessary to pursue high-profile corruption cases, that by itself was far from sufficient to ensure that public resources were used effectively for development. The Government had therefore formulated a national strategy for fighting corruption and had given complete independence to the Anti-Corruption Commission in its work. At the same time it was dealing with more pervasive factors such as inefficiency, poor management, lack of coordination — in short, lack of capacity. Robust financial management tools were in place, and key bilateral partners had noted the progress made. In reality, however, the country was reaching the limits of progress at the current stage because the capacity for service delivery destroyed by the war was only beginning to be rebuilt.

17. To complicate matters, the Government had to contend with the unintended consequences of development aid. For example, an estimated 25 per cent of aid to the county bypassed government channels, making it difficult to maintain a coherent policy in many areas covered by such aid. That was all the more serious because government structures were still weak. A useful partnership would require support to government capacity-building efforts instead of strengthening parallel structures. Another issue was the trend for aid to be tied to benchmarks. A table of 201 benchmarks had recently been compiled, on which regular reporting was required. In recognition of that burden, the Improved Governance and Accountability Pact (IGAP) had recently been adopted.

18. There were also long delays associated with aid implementation, sometimes up to two years. The Government thus hesitated to announce aid agreements, as non-action was often interpreted by the people as evidence of misappropriation of funding. That situation was aggravated by micromanagement of projects, which added to delays and frustration among beneficiaries who were interested only in the results of the project.

19. An even more serious problem was the development of a parallel system of government by donors. Donors financed what they thought was civil society to undertake activities that government should normally perform but could not because of weak institutions. Many of the NGOs supported were actually created by enterprising graduates with limited job opportunities looking for access to money from donors. What could be described as an "NGO industry" had grown up in Sierra Leone. Unfortunately, the limited number of trained people tended to gravitate towards it, thus depriving fledgling institutions of much-needed human resources. Furthermore, such groups were accountable only to their limited membership and to the donors that financed them. The Government was doing its best to re-establish the legitimate institutions responsible for service delivery, yet those institutions were being undermined by parallel structures that were not accountable to the people at large, but were well funded. There was no objection to genuine members of civil society complementing Government efforts to provide services to the public, or acting as lobbying groups or as checks on abuses or excesses of government officials. However, there should be a balance between spending on non-formal institutions and strengthening of government institutions.

20. Sierra Leone was still handicapped by poor infrastructure, which limited the provision of health and other social services. The target of a school and health centre every five miles was far from being met. Lack of infrastructure also increased food prices; shortage of energy and water supply continued to stunt private sector development.

21. Paradoxically, since peace had been established, the population expected all services to resume immediately. Its frustration at not receiving the peace dividend immediately was understandable, because the State's lack of capacity was aggravated by the dramatic drop in external support once the peacekeepers had left. The result was an enormous strain on the meagre resources of a country emerging from conflict. The Government was satisfied that it had a sound policy framework. It had programmes with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, UNDP, the European Union and bilateral donors; the Poverty Reduction Strategy was in place and an assessment mission on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals was planned. Sierra Leone hoped

to reach the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative completion point by the end of the year, which would lead to total debt forgiveness. The problem was the lack of capacity to implement the major programmes in place.

22. The mineral wealth of Sierra Leone also represented a paradox. The Government had been careful in its dealings with mining companies so as not to deter other investors. Yet most of the agreements reached were not in the country's favour and very little of the dividends accrued to the State. It had therefore made plans with IMF to review its mining contracts. A related problem concerned fishery resources. The catch of artisanal fisherman was declining steadily because of foreign trawlers close to the shores. In addition, there were limitations on exports of marine products because of foreign trade and policy barriers. Consequently, fishing grounds were being depleted, and an important source of food and revenue was generating much less than its potential.

23. The stability of the subregion was another difficulty related to the conflict. Sierra Leone was not the only country in the region that had been in crisis; with its porous borders, any instability in the region was bound to have direct repercussions. There were also related issues such as smuggling of drugs and diamonds and human trafficking. The Government had reinforced its border control but a better option would be promoting subregional programmes for border control. In addition to active participation in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), revitalizing the Mano River Union was a priority.

24. The World Bank Consultative Group Meeting held in London in November 2005 had raised funds on the basis of Sierra Leone's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Presumably part of the work of the Commission would be to help the Government track the resources pledged at that Meeting.

25. The private sector could serve as the engine for development growth. The Sierra Leonean Government was willing to provide the social, political and economic environment to facilitate that growth, but building of institutions and mechanisms must be pursued vigorously. In the meantime, it needed support to deal with the short-term requirements of the population until levels of self-sustaining growth were reached. That was where the Peacebuilding Commission could be helpful, and he had high hopes that the current deliberations would produce concrete results.

26. **Mr. Angelo** (Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL)) said that, since the end of the conflict, Sierra Leone had made significant progress in restoring peace and stability, promoting national recovery and establishing institutions of democratic governance. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme had been completed and State authority extended throughout the country, and national and local government elections held.

27. Notwithstanding those achievements, the situation remained fragile and further efforts were required to address the root causes of the conflict, which still existed, as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission acknowledged. Strengthening the democratic process through greater political participation of youth and women, improving accountability and performance of public institutions and reviving the economy remained key challenges.

28. Despite its enormous potential, Sierra Leone had yet to attract large-scale domestic and foreign direct investment, and remained vulnerable to external economic factors. The lack of job opportunities had resulted in unmet expectations, especially among youth. Although the Government, with the support of the international community, had taken major strides in restoration of public services, the performance of those institutions remained inadequate to meet basic needs. The justice sector continued to suffer from lack of capacity, and the corrections system faced even more serious challenges. Progress had been made in reform of the police and armed forces, but both required additional assistance in logistics and training.

29. Sierra Leone would hold its second post-conflict presidential and parliamentary elections in July 2007, which would be conducted with the limited means available in the country. The National Electoral Commission had been restructured, and its challenge was to organize the elections in a timely and credible manner. The Political Parties' Registration Commission, a vital conflict resolution mechanism, was seriously under-resourced and understaffed. There was a UNDP-managed "basket fund", but a gap of about $9 million remained that must be mobilized

urgently. The political process remained susceptible to volatility, with particular concern about some displays of intolerance, which raised the risk of confrontation.

30. Continued progress towards lasting peace, development and democratization depended to a great extent on the accountability of public institutions. The Government had taken measures aimed at administrative and fiscal decentralization to the district level, but the newly established local councils often found themselves in competition for scarce resources with traditional chiefs. There had been substantial improvements in the human rights situation, including the recent establishment of the National Human Rights Commission, which needed considerable assistance to implement the key recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

31. Sierra Leone's stability was closely linked to developments in the subregion, in particular the situation in Liberia, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. Moreover, cross-border challenges, such as the illicit movement of small arms, drugs, diamonds and human trafficking also called for effective subregional cooperation.

32. In order to address the challenges facing the country in a holistic manner, the Government had developed a comprehensive Poverty Reduction Strategy, which was complemented by a Peace Consolidation Strategy. A Security Sector Reform Programme was also progressing well.

33. The United Nations continued to support national efforts to complete the recovery and create the foundations for sustainable development. Following the end of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone in December 2005, the Security Council had established a new United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL), bringing together the political, security, human rights and development dimensions of the Organization's work in Sierra Leone. The United Nations country team had completed the revision of the Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) to realign it with the Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Peace Consolidation Strategy, giving particular attention to issues of capacity-building, gender equality and youth.

34. Notwithstanding the progress made, Sierra Leone continued to face serious challenges to consolidate its achievements and to address the root causes of the conflict. Further progress in those areas would require the continued engagement and support of the international community.

35. **Mr. Carlson** (World Bank), speaking via videoconference from Accra, praised the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission as a forum for securing post-conflict security and development. Sierra Leone had made progress since the cessation of hostilities, and every effort should be made to ensure that future progress was not undermined.

36. According to the World Bank's country policy and institutional assessment, Sierra Leone had risen from a level of 2.5 in 2001 to 3.1 in 2005 and was deemed to have made remarkable progress. However, considering that decades earlier Sierra Leone had had a much stronger economy, there was clearly a need to accelerate the progress achieved. Attention to governance, growth and partnership were key elements in ensuring a continued positive outcome.

37. The Government of Sierra Leone had implemented a series of measures based on the Governance and Accountability Pact, which would require concerted action in key areas, including anti-corruption, procurement, civil service reform, an extractive industries transparency initiative and the holding of elections. Each area of focus required firm action that would form the basis for building core capacity of the State, and achieving governance standards that were fundamental to the achievement of development, progress, equity and the Millennium Development Goals.

38. He joined previous speakers in highlighting the issue of decentralization and its importance in maintaining popular confidence in the pace of progress. Revenue mobilization and business regulation were also necessary for the smooth functioning of the business environment, and natural resource and environment management and governance were of paramount importance in furthering the goals of the Pact.

39. Job creation was also an important tool for accelerating growth in Sierra Leone, especially in view of the low median age of the population. Apart from generating broader economic benefits, the provision of gainful employment broadened horizons and fostered self-reliance among the population, and empowered young people to make positive life choices.

40. Sierra Leone had performed well at the macroeconomic level and the World Bank hoped shortly to alleviate its debt burden under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiatives. A multi-donor strategy, through a collaborative effort by development partners, had been envisaged to provide budget support on the basis of the objectives of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

41. Notwithstanding improvements in the labour market, business regulation and financial sector reform, it was crucial to establish a solid infrastructure. Admittedly, improving the energy and water supply, transport, telecommunications and other essential components was a costly endeavour. In 2005, the World Bank had allocated substantial resources to the transport sector, and had targeted energy as the next area of focus. Higher GDP levels and poverty reduction depended on significant levels of funding. It was also important to harness Sierra Leone's potential in agriculture, especially in terms of diversifying its export options beyond the diamond trade, for the benefit of the population at large.

42. He stressed the importance of the participation of Sierra Leone in development partnership mechanisms. The Consultative Group Meeting held in November 2005 had produced an encouraging assessment of financing. A follow-up Meeting was scheduled for November 2006, to assess the results achieved in the interim and the trend with respect to the flow of resources. He assured the Commission that development partners were committed to harmonization programmes and other measures that would address remaining shortcomings. In that context, he expressed the hope that the Peacebuilding Commission would support the process of country-level dialogue, and reiterated the commitment of the World Bank to support the Government and Sierra Leonean society in achieving progress.

43. **Mr. Bio-Tchané** (International Monetary Fund) said that, with the support of the international community, Sierra Leone had made strides towards achieving macroeconomic stability, rehabilitating war-ravaged communities, improving social services and rebuilding capacity in many areas. Technical and financial assistance delivered by the Fund had also focused on those areas. In addition, the Fund's assistance to Sierra Leone under the emergency post-conflict assistance programme between 1998 and 2000 had been directed primarily at rebuilding the country's institutional and administrative capacity, promoting economic growth, minimizing financial imbalances, and regularizing the country's relations with external creditors. Such assistance, coupled with donor support and implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, had created conditions for the resumption of economic growth. Real GDP had grown from minus 8 per cent in 1999 to 18 per cent by 2001. Tighter macroeconomic policies and improvements in the supply situation after the conclusion of the Lomé peace accord, had reduced the annual average rate of inflation from over 30 per cent in 1999 to minus 3.7 per cent in 2002.

44. In the peace consolidation phase, assistance had been provided through the Fund's poverty reduction and growth facility (PRGF), which entailed a three-year arrangement to support the Government's economic programme for the period 2001-2004. Approximately $187 million had been disbursed during that period.

45. Although Sierra Leone had successfully completed the PRGF process, the Fund had continued its involvement, in order to help the Government to address the development and medium-term external financing needs that persisted. Further assistance had been granted through a successor PRGF arrangement to support a national poverty reduction strategy, consistent with the Millennium Development Goals, and in line with the Government's vision of channelling resources to poverty reduction, with emphasis on nation-building, economic stability through fiscal management, effective monetary policy and promotion of private sector growth.

46. In addition to direct financial assistance, Sierra Leone had benefited from debt relief under the enhanced HIPC Initiative amounting to $98 million. Sierra Leone would qualify for further debt relief because of its strong economic performance. Similarly, based on the findings of an IMF staff mission, the overall positive assessment indicated that Sierra Leone would reach the completion point under the enhanced HIPC initiative in December 2006 and qualify for multilateral debt relief. A prudent external financing strategy and increased highly concessional donor support would then be essential to maintaining debt sustainability over the medium term.

47. Given Sierra Leone's vulnerable external position, the Fund's recommendations concerned fiscal sustainability in terms of safeguarding macroeconomic stability and protecting spending on poverty reduction. It was therefore crucial for Sierra Leone to strengthen domestic revenue collection and promote better governance. A stable and predictable investment climate would, among other things, broaden the tax base and help mobilize domestic resources.

48. The Fund would remain engaged in Sierra Leone, working in close cooperation with other development partners, to ensure that resources released by debt relief and external financial assistance were used efficiently. The Fund's mission to Sierra Leone had reached the important conclusion that peace and stability had not yet translated into improved living conditions for the people of Sierra Leone, which made the role of the Peacebuilding Commission all the more critical.

49. **Ms. Pierce** (United Kingdom) said that her country was proud to be among the international donors of assistance to Sierra Leone, and was committed to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in ensuring that reforms taking place in the countries under consideration were irreversible.

50. With regard to the potentials and challenges confronting Sierra Leone, the issues related to the mineral sector and youth unemployment were particularly interesting. A comprehensive strategy must be formulated to attract foreign direct investment and maximize Sierra Leone's export potential and in that context, the rule of law and governance were crucial. The United Kingdom fully supported the comprehensive reform of the justice system and efforts to establish improved systems of internal coordination.

51. The United Kingdom had entered into a 10-year development partnership with Sierra Leone, based on its belief in the value of long-term and predictable support. The donor community as a whole might need to make a greater effort to fulfil commitments under accepted guidelines for aid effectiveness. The Peacebuilding Commission was an appropriate platform for holding donors accountable and encouraging debate on the vital issues relating to development in Sierra Leone. It was also important to respect the preferences expressed by the Government on the allocation of aid for capacity-building.

52. **Mr. Akram** (Pakistan) said that the problems confronting societies in post-conflict situations and revealing the weaknesses of international response provided the major justification for the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission. The deliberations and conclusions of the Commission must identify the issues contributing to shortcomings in international response to conflict situations, and reach meaningful conclusions on ways to overcome them.

53. In addressing the concerns expressed by the representative of Sierra Leone, there were four key points to bear in mind. First, rebuilding and reconstruction programmes should be country-led, and the Poverty Reduction Strategy should be based on national and international actions. Second, given the risk of a return to instability unless the security environment were strengthened, the assistance of the international community, including in the security sector, should not be withdrawn prematurely. Third, with reference to the unintended consequences of development aid described by the representative of Sierra Leone, the issue of how to improve the performance of the international community must be addressed. He wondered to what extent the international community's work in Sierra Leone complied with the guidelines of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, for example, since the obligation to report on 201 benchmarks was unrealistic. On the issue of civil society, he concurred with the representative of Sierra Leone on the need to avoid creating a parallel system of government by donors: priority must be given to strengthening institutions accountable to the national Government. Fourth, the concerns expressed by the representative of Sierra Leone relating to the country's natural resources, in particular the exploitation of its mineral wealth by international corporations, needed to be addressed in a systemic manner, because the scramble for mineral resources was one of the root causes of the conflicts in the African region in general.

54. **Mr. Valenzuela** (European Commission) thanked the Committee for inviting the European Commission to participate in the country-specific meeting, reflecting its role as a major donor in Sierra Leone. The European Union played an equally important role in the associated political process and, in line with that dual European engagement in peacebuilding, had made a request to the Organizational Committee concerning the possibility of its representation, to which it hoped

to receive a positive answer. In the meantime, for the country-specific meetings that day and the next, the European Community would be associating the Presidency and the Secretariat of the Council of the European Union in its delegation.

55. **Ms. Kanerva** (Finland) said that her country currently held the European Union Presidency. The European Union was strongly involved in political dialogue in the region under discussion, particularly in the context of the International Contact Group on the Mano River Basin. and the Mano River Union. Political dialogue between the Peacebuilding Commission, the international community and the Government of Sierra Leone must include discussion with the opposition and civil society, and should be driven by clear objectives in order to consolidate the process of peace and security, good governance, democratization and rule of law. The European Union's strategy was based on a broad approach to peacebuilding, including promotion of democratic governance, rule of law, security and development. The insufficiency of human resources in Sierra Leone must be addressed, as it led to problems such as lengthy pre-trial detention and inability to tackle corruption. The peacebuilding and stabilization process should therefore include: ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; promoting debate between government and civil society; and follow-up of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations. Lastly, an effective peacebuilding strategy for Sierra Leone must take into account the regional dynamic of the conflict, with all relevant regional actors engaged in the process.

56. **Mr. Wahab** (Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)) acknowledged the efforts made by Sierra Leone in the area of national reconstruction and institution-building, and endorsed the crucial points made by the representative of that country. Sierra Leone deserved the full support of the international community, which must take into account the priorities and needs of the Government itself. The OIC Contact Group on Sierra Leone was working very closely with that Government in identifying and implementing projects in the area of national reconstruction and institution-building. In such work, the focus must be on nationally determined projects and priorities, and on capacity-building of the Government and state institutions, rather than eroding their authority by creating a parallel civil-society-led system of government.

57. **Ms. Johnson** (African Development Bank) said that the African Development Bank was committed to addressing the situation of fragile States more forcefully than before. The value of the Peacebuilding Commission's work was twofold: first, its joint rather than separate consideration of the security, political peace process, stabilization and socio-economic dimensions; and, second, its consideration of what to do next. The representative of Sierra Leone had illustrated the problem of the "donor circus", in which donors sometimes undermined the Government's efforts, and she acknowledged that the African Development Bank was one of the culprits.

58. Three kinds of reforms were necessary in the area of donor performance. The first was institutional reform, such as that being implemented at the African Development Bank. The second was operational reform, which should be guided by the commitments and benchmarks contained in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the implementation of which must be ensured in Sierra Leone based on the needs of the Government. Benchmarks could also be introduced for donors themselves, to ensure better performance. The third kind of reform required was in the challenging, expensive area of technical assistance and capacity-building, which did not always yield the necessary practical results in terms of stable, sustainable strengthening of the State's capacity to deliver services to its people.

59. The African Development Bank was studying the subject of fragile States, with the aim of changing its operational procedures and providing new grant resources in those countries. She described some of the operations being carried out by the Bank in the areas of governance and institution-building, and in the socio-economic sphere, including vocational training, which was of importance given the youth unemployment problem. To ensure the effective implementation of those operations, however, the Bank and other donors must improve their performance, perhaps on a country-by-country basis. She encouraged the Chairman to consider what kind of specific outcomes could be generated by the current meeting, taking into account both the proposals relating to donor performance and those put forward by the Sierra Leonean Government.

60. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh) commended the efforts of the Sierra Leone Government to achieve stability. Bangladesh had been very involved in the peacekeeping process in that country and had maintained bilateral political and economic contact. It could therefore be said to have a "stake" in Sierra Leone's stability and consolidation of peace — as indeed all other countries did. The goal of peacebuilding work in that country must be to achieve an equilibrium in which random events would not lead to a return to chaos. The challenge was to keep post-conflict societies such as Sierra Leone in focus, even once the peacekeepers had left. The representative of Sierra Leone had spoken of warning signs, pointing to the fragility of peace, including the problem of youth unemployment. One of his key exhortations had been for support to deal with the short-term requirements of the population until levels of self-sustaining growth were reached, saying that that was where the Peacebuilding Commission could be helpful, and he concurred with that view. The Commission must take note of those comments, and do its utmost to ensure stability in Sierra Leone. Bangladesh, too, had taken decades to restore post-conflict growth, which had been possible only through a combination of national initiatives and international support. Sharing that experience with post-conflict societies in the developing world, particularly in Africa, would be useful.

61. It was important to build pluralist political institutions in Sierra Leone to provide the societal framework in which peacebuilding activities could take place. Government accountability was also important, in order to reduce corruption and foster democracy. The establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was to be welcomed: there should be neither impunity nor retributive justice. Scarce resources must be allocated wisely, for example to the priority sectors of education and health, and external stakeholders must liaise with the Government in their work to create appropriate infrastructures. Once the framework was laid, civil society could play a significant role. He quoted the example of the microcredit schemes in Bangladesh, which had transformed the societal landscape and had played a particularly valuable role in the area of non-formal education of women, and consequently their empowerment, one of the effects of which was the marginalization of violence.

62. Most post-conflict societies fell into the category of least developed countries, to which the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 applied. Attention must be paid to those countries' critical needs, such as the simultaneous provision of official development assistance and capacity-building actions. Stabilizing a post-conflict society was not easy, but examples showed that it was possible.

63. **Mr. Verbeke** (Belgium) said that the comments of the representative of Sierra Leone relating to development policy and donors must be taken into account, particularly in view of the threats to peace to which he had referred.

64. Attention must be paid to three areas: security, governance and justice. In the area of security, progress had been made, and he welcomed the success achieved in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. However, vigilance was still required concerning the capabilities of the country's police force and the issue of cross-border flows of small arms. Youth unemployment was a key element to be addressed, requiring thorough development policies to prevent young people falling prey to recruitment by the militia. Job creation was key, but other important areas were education, stimulation of private initiatives, and management of natural resources. While the funding of public construction work could be useful, in the longer term it was necessary to create a climate for investment to create a dynamic private sector.

65. In the area of governance, considerable progress had been made, but it was necessary to strengthen capacity-building of public institutions. Good economic governance could be maximized by working towards a more effective tax administration.

66. In the area of justice, while the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague had the support of many countries, there was scope for more effective implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He concurred with other speakers that the regional dimension was also important, and called for capacity-building of the relevant bodies of which Sierra Leone was a member, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Mano River Union.

67. **Ms. Mladineo** (Croatia) noted that, while considerable progress had been made in Sierra Leone, some of the root causes of the conflict remained.

Representing a country that had experienced a post-conflict situation, she highlighted the importance of the processes of political security and democratization. While the political will existed to extend the process of stabilization and development, progress was slow. However, if consensus existed, the efforts of the international community could help move the process forward. Before the stage of consolidation and development, however, post-conflict societies had to deal with issues such as reconstruction, capacity-building and strengthening of security.

68. The problems referred to by the representative of Sierra Leone must be addressed. It was necessary to involve the Government and its relevant agencies in all aspects of peacebuilding work, and to strengthen implementation capacity.

69. Among the issues highlighted by the representative of Sierra Leone that could be of particular interest to the Commission were the justice and security sectors, democracy reinforcement and the enhancement of public services. Croatia's experience in dealing with support from the international and donor communities confirmed the need for serious attention to cooperation and coordination. Acceptance of such aid required strengthened capacities on the receiving side, although it was also important for aid providers to have a holistic understanding of the recipient country. While the representative of Sierra Leone had rightly pointed to the problem of parallel structures among non-governmental organizations, that problem arose within Government structures in the capacity-building process as well. The coordination of international aid was thus of great importance, and it was also important to maintain awareness of regional implications when dealing with such issues as fisheries and mining. She also stressed the importance of education, which as the cornerstone of development required greater attention from the international community.

70. **Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt) said that the task of the Commission with regard to Sierra Leone could be divided into the areas of human capacity-building and institutional capacity-building. The first area concerned youth employment and empowerment and the second involved development of the security sector, justice, enhanced delivery of public services, and reinforcing democratic institutions. The Commission should, in its summary conclusion, endorse the importance of the four priority areas cited by the representative of Sierra Leone and initiate projects in those areas.

71. **Mr. Wolfe** (Jamaica) expressed concern about the threats to peace mentioned by the representative of Sierra Leone, which needed to be addressed specifically by the Commission. Any medium- or long-term efforts undertaken in Sierra Leone should not lose sight of the development dimension. While the country had achieved remarkable economic growth, it was still not generating enough wealth to attain sustainable development. The issue of youth unemployment was stark, but the Commission should give equal attention to all sectors requiring assistance. In seeking to enhance capacity-building, the measures needed to kick-start the economy could not be taken in isolation. There was a need for innovative ways to facilitate foreign investment flows so as to generate employment, as well as for strengthening the private sector in order to foster economic growth and development. Economic recovery and risk reduction had to be tackled in tandem.

72. **Mr. Gopinathan** (India) said that attention should be given to the four priority areas enunciated by the representative of Sierra Leone, and called on the Commission to support and supplement, not supplant, the national plans and priorities of the Government of Sierra Leone. He placed particular emphasis on the area of youth unemployment, and offered to provide training courses in a wide variety of areas in which India had expertise.

73. Trade was not only a path to prosperity but could also contribute to peacebuilding. In view of the importance of harnessing the export potential of Sierra Leone, he called on the Commission to explore ways of addressing the lack of export diversity cited by the representative of the World Bank. India could also contribute to capacity-building in the justice and security sector, and suggested drawing on the United Nations Democracy Fund for the strengthening of democratic institutions envisaged by the Government of Sierra Leone. Enhanced delivery of public services was also worthy of full support, and India was again willing to share its experience in the public service sector in the form of training programmes.

74. **Mr. Jenie** (Indonesia) said that the priorities outlined by the representative of Sierra Leone should form the basis of the Commission's work in assisting the Government to sustain the peace process. He

stressed the importance of Government coordination of the participation of civil society in that process, and cited his own country's experience with the massive influx of aid following the 2005 tsunami. Civil society participation should strengthen the authority of the Government in delivering public services and careful prioritization was needed.

75. **Ms. Pratt** (Network for Collaborative Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone) said that civil society organizations had played a significant role in all aspects of peacebuilding in Sierra Leone, leading to the establishment of a sound democratic process. They had recently organized a national consultation to focus on the mandate of the Commission, at which several key areas had been identified as crucial for consideration by the Commission during its country-specific meetings.

76. The first such area was the implementation and dissemination of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, in which civil society organizations, especially the media, could play a critical role by raising popular awareness of the poverty reduction process.

77. The second area was human resource development, including skills training for youth and empowerment for women, especially in view of the vulnerability of children and women in conflict and their importance in building peace.

78. The third priority area was strengthening the capacity of national civil society organizations and public institutions, which should be supported by Government and donor agencies through the provision of infrastructure, equipment and skills training. In the context of the reform of the legal system, the justice sector, the National Human Rights Commission and the Law Reform Commission should have adequate resources and qualified personnel, and should be provided with modern infrastructure and logistics as well as improved conditions of service. The offices of the Attorney-General and of the Minister of Justice should be separate. Reform of the security sector required improved training for the military and the police, local government reform and improvement of conditions of service.

79. The fourth priority area was the establishment of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Civil society organizations and national non-governmental organizations should design a framework to monitor and evaluate the impact of the Commission in Sierra Leone, and should conduct periodic reviews of Government and international efforts to strengthen the various public sectors of the economy.

80. The fifth priority area was the strengthening of effective collaboration among Governments and between Governments and civil society in the Mano River Basin, focusing on long-term and holistic capacity-building for civil society organizations, increased collaboration to develop a mechanism for exchanging ideas and experiences, and common approaches to collective action on peacebuilding and related issues in the subregion.

81. The Peace Consolidation Strategy documents should be used as the reference points for the engagement of civil society, which should be involved in the design of Government programmes.

82. **Mr. Christian** (Ghana) said that, despite laudable achievements in restoring peace and stability, promoting national recovery and establishing good governance, Sierra Leone might lose those gains unless they were consolidated and the root causes of its conflict were addressed. The Peace Consolidation Strategy, developed with the support of the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone, should facilitate the implementation of Sierra Leone's long-term development objectives and enhance its national capacities for conflict prevention.

83. As the representative of Sierra Leone had rightly observed, post-war youth unemployment was breeding resentment and frustration, and posed a serious challenge to peace and security. In response, the Government had developed a programme to engage the youth in constructive nation-building activities and thereby maintain social order.

84. While considerable progress had also been made in reform of the justice and security sectors, much remained to be done to enhance their performance and effectiveness. International support was required for the people of Sierra Leone to be assured of the effectiveness of the administration of justice. The country also required international assistance to enable it to strengthen its democratic institutions and conduct the upcoming national elections in a free and fair atmosphere. Assistance to Parliament and civil society in capacity-building and the promotion of peace, justice and development also merited serious

consideration and support. Sierra Leone needed integrated and sustained support that would enable it to implement holistic programmes. Its inclusion in the country-specific programme of the Commission was thus timely and opportune.

85. **Mr. Matussek** (Germany) said that the Government and people of Sierra Leone had made substantial progress towards consolidating peace and security for their country. A maximum of commitment and dynamism was needed on the part of the Government to ensure that the process continued. The upcoming elections in 2007 would be a crucial step for the consolidation of the peace process, and support for their organization and proper monitoring should be important priorities for the coming months. Institutional capacity-building, anti-corruption efforts and human rights were of concern; the issues of youth unemployment and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons also needed attention. He called on the Commission to include the issues he had raised in the list of issues it chose to address.

86. **Mr. Deruffe** (France) said that the statement by the representative of Sierra Leone was an excellent starting point for the Commission's work. He also welcomed the fact that all the important actors were present at the current meeting of the Commission and could therefore work productively together. The many issues of concern that had been raised should be addressed in conjunction with economic and infrastructural reforms.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.